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SERVICE

USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · OFFICE OF INFORMATION · WASHINGTON, D. C. 20250

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FOOD FACTS

CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS

Food Buyers Quiz. Here's a chance to find out how good a food shopper you really are. Test your knowledge against a panel of show-business personalities--Dr. Joyce Brothers, Betty Furness, country music star Boots Randolph and comedian George Kirby. They'll all appear on The National Food Buyers Quiz to be seen and heard on educational television stations from coast to coast November 17 at 8 p.m. Hugh Downs will ask the questions and field the answers. You take the test along with the panel. To obtain free answering blanks for your club or organization, write to the Editor, SERVICE, Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250. Be sure to specify how many blanks you'd like.

Boom Times for the Blue Plate. The blue plate special has been taken out of the once-in-a-blue-moon category. More and more people are eating away from home -- hot dogs at the ball park, thick steaks at plush restaurants, soup and sandwiches in the company cafeteria. According to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, the typical American family with an income of around \$5,000 a year spends \$200 or so each year on food away from home. Upper income families (of \$15,000 a year income) spend \$900. Today, the blue plate special -- in all its many forms -- costs \$20 billion a year. By 1975 -- with more money to spend and more people to spend it -- this could reach \$35 billion.

Pick the Plentifuls. Make your food dollar go further by choosing foods in good supply. They usually are cheaper. On the U. S. Department of Agriculture list of plentiful foods for October are pork, broiler-fryers, apples, grapes, pears, rice and dry beans. In November, look for lots of raisins and turkeys--they're the featured items on the November list--also more grapes, pears, pork and dry beans.

Savings in Time. If time is money to you--even if no more than 50 cents an hour--switch to processed potatoes. Chances are 3 to 1 they'll cost you less than fixing fresh. U. S. Department of Agriculture food scientists say that in all instances--except when boiling frozen whole potatoes--processed potatoes save the homemaker time.



RESEARCH

Over and Out. If you should see a deer wearing a collar and sporting a radio antenna, don't rush to the optometrist. Your eyesight is excellent. There are 20 such deer roaming the fields and forests of Florida and Alabama -- sending radio signals back to the Auburn Wildlife Research Unit. These signals are being used to check the deer's activities. In recent months, considerable crop damage has been attributed to the white-tailed deer. Wildlife biologists now want to know just how far these four-footed fellows actually come to dinner. Research so far shows the deer roam only within a 1/2 square mile area. But if a deer is released in unfamiliar surroundings, he'll wander over 5 square miles.

Smoggy Weather. Man isn't the only one who suffers from air pollution. Plants do too, U. S. Department of Agriculture scientists find. Sulfur dioxide (a product of fuel combustion for power and heating) and ozone (which is formed by the reaction of sunlight on the exhaust from motor vehicles) are two of the worst offenders. Furthermore, when these two pollutants get together, the mixture is more damaging at a given concentration than either alone. These pollutants can damage a wide variety of vegetable, field and ornamental plants. They reduce the leaf quality of spinach. They cut the yield of cereal grains, grapes, beans and citrus fruit. And they damage the leaves of trees and hinder the development of ornamentals.

On the Tip of Their Tongue. You may have an educated palate, but no American can even guess how people in other lands will react to a particular food. And for this reason, foreign students at Howard University are being used to taste-test research foods being developed for their part of the world. The research, conducted in cooperation with the U. S. Department of Agriculture, focuses attention on plant proteins that could be made into tasty food for hungry people. Recipes using cottonseed, soy and peanut flour are now being developed and tested on students from Africa, India and Jamaica.

Through the Mill. Villagers in countries where protein foods are in short supply may some day learn to make their own soybean flour. A new milling method, developed by U. S. Department of Agriculture scientists, simplifies the process. It uses inexpensive and readily available equipment. It is easy to learn, easy to do. And it could open the door to a wide new world of better nutrition for the many people living in countries where meat, milk and eggs are scarce. The soy flour process discards only the hulls in converting soybeans into full-fat flour. The end product contains 20 percent fat and 40 percent protein. It is expected to be used in beverages, soups and various cooked dishes.

Who Would Have Thought It? Here's some long-range research that probably won't make any difference to you, your children or their children but could be important to the next generation to come. The U. S. Department of Agriculture is trying to hurry up the growth of walnut trees. Fertilization could do the trick but will it affect the quality of the wood? The scientists are currently checking this out. One application of fertilizer, they find, will keep the trees growing at a maximum rate for 8 years. Repeated applications could stimulate the growth rate by 200 or 300 percent. Normally, it takes 60 to 150 years for a tree to reach veneer quality size. Speeded up production could--in a relatively short time--double or triple the commercial output of walnut--one of this country's most valued wood.

NEW PRODUCTS

You Name It. It isn't butter. It isn't cheese. Yet it has the qualities of each and can be used in similar ways. It's a new low-calorie dairy product developed at the South Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station--so new it hasn't a name. Although butter-like in appearance and taste, the new product spreads directly from the refrigerator yet does not get too soft to spread well at room temperature. It stays creamy when placed on hot cakes, waffles and corn-on-the-cob. It blends readily into doughs and batters. It has good moisture-holding ability in frostings, cakes and cookies. And it contains only about 60 percent as many calories as margarine, mayonnaise or butter . . . But don't rush off to the grocery store and expect to buy this new dairy product. It's not yet out of research.

Fore! Neither soap nor water nor perspiration can harm golf gloves treated with glutaraldehyde, a new leather processing method developed by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Already used for shoe uppers, coats and other leather products, the glutaraldehyde process makes golf gloves last longer and wear better. In actual wear tests, glutaraldehyde-tanned gloves were used for 8 months by 22 active golfers. The gloves were washed 5 to 8 times with warm water and soap or detergent. Each time they dried without stiffening or cracking. All of the golfers said they liked the treated gloves better than any others they had worn.

HOUSING

Old Folks at Home. U. S. Department of Agriculture housing specialists have come up with two homes that are ideal to grow old in. They have been specially designed for retired farm couples who want to stay on the farm yet don't want to live in a big, old farmhouse. Each house contains safety features to prevent accidents caused by poor vision, lack of balance, an unsteady hand. Shelves are within easy reach; doorways wheelchair wide; bathrooms large enough so one person can help another without bumping into fixtures. Compact and convenient, these homes would be equally suitable for suburban living. For more details write to the Editor, SERVICE, Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250.

MISCELLANEOUS

Added Trifle on Truffles. Here's a new note for prospective truffle growers. While lining up a pig with a super sniffer, line up an entry permit for the oak seedlings coming from France. Their roots might carry some unwanted plant diseases along with the truffles. To get them into this country, you'll need to get an entry permit before you place your order. Write to the Plant Quarantine Division, ARS, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Federal Center Building, Hyattsville, Md. 20782. -- Or, perhaps better yet, forget the whole thing and buy your truffles at the nearest gourmet counter.

Here a Chick, There a Chick. Cheeping chicks, airshipped in 18 hours from Boston to Bombay, may be the beginning of a new line of Indian chickens -- a line that will put more eggs and broilers on Indian dinner tables. The breed is a cross developed for its ability to resist the poultry diseases of India and to produce more eggs in the climate of India. Nearly 3 million baby chicks make the trip from the U. S. to Asia annually -- a big market that's getting bigger every year.

YARD AND GARDEN

Squirrel-Proofing. Most people like nuts; all squirrels do. And therein lies a problem. Few of the nuts planted ever grow into trees. The squirrels dig them up within a few days. To stymie the squirrels, the U. S. Department of Agriculture suggests planting tree nuts in tin cans. Use a hatchet to cut an "X" in the bottom of a No.2 food can. Dig a hole deep enough to cover the upright can. Put 1 inch of topsoil in the can (hold the bottom so the soil doesn't seep out), put in the nut and fill the can with soil. Firm lightly. Now--quickly invert the can and place it in the hole. Fill the hole with topsoil, bend the tips of the "X" back to make a 1-inch opening (for the tree to grow through) and firm the soil around the can. It's squirrel proof. (Note: October to December is a good time to plant tree nuts. However, before planting, season the nuts for two weeks in a shady place until the husks start turning brown.)

Out, Blackspot! Blackspot--a fungus disease of roses that plagues many home gardeners--may soon be overcome by crossing an artificially altered multiflora rose with garden varieties. U. S. Department of Agriculture scientists have found a way to double the chromosomes in one multiflora rose (resistant to blackspot) so that it can be crossed with garden roses. This opens the way to many new rose varieties. Of the 200 some species of roses, only 9 provide breeding stock for garden roses. If the chromosomes of the others could also be changed and used for breeding, garden varieties could be made more fragrant as well as resistant to all sorts of diseases and nematodes.

Salute to Spring. Want to have the first flowers in the neighborhood next spring? Plant crocuses--on the south side of your house, right up against the foundation. The heat from your basement will keep the soil warm and send up the crocus shoots at the first hint of spring. According to U. S. Department of Agriculture horticulturists, crocus bulbs should be planted in early fall with their tips 2 inches below the surface--a little deeper in loose, sandy soil. Choose big bulbs for big blooms. And for showy display, plant the bulbs in clusters and masses. For the complete crocus story--as well as information on daffodils, tulips, hyacinths, iris and scillas--write for "Spring Flowering Bulbs" (L-439). Single copies are free from the Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250.

RECREATION

A-Hunting You Can Go. Pheasants and farmers are two things that just naturally go together. To hunt pheasants, you've got to know a farmer. At least you did. Nowadays, however, more and more farmers are opening their lands to anyone who wants to hunt for a fee. It happened in Custer County, Nebraska. And it's happening elsewhere. A group of farmers, signed up by the local Rural Areas Development Committee, offer hunting privileges for \$1 a day. The hunters like the idea. The farmers like the money. So do the nearby communities -- who sell shells, snacks and supplies to the visiting sportsmen.

SERVICE is a monthly newsletter of consumer interest. It is designed for those who report to the individual consumer rather than for mass distribution. For information about items in this issue, write: Jeanne S. Park, Editor, SERVICE, Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250.